

The Office of the Mississippi Secretary of State

Five Year Strategic Plan

For the Fiscal Years 2022 - 2026



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SECRETARY OF STATE

1. Agency Mission Statement

The Secretary of State’s Office exists and is committed to serving the citizens of the State of Mississippi by fulfilling our statutory requirements for Business Services and Regulation, Charities, Communications & Publications, Elections, External Affairs, Policy & Research, Public Lands, and Securities in a transparent, efficient and cost effective manner.

2. Statement of Agency Philosophy

First established in the 1817 Constitution of the State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Secretary of State has since been entrusted with a number of additional duties, responsibilities, and functions by the State Legislature. We are dedicated to being both a service and information agency - committed to modeling efficient, effective operations and prudent resource management.

3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

(From the “Statewide Strategic Plan for Performance and Budgetary Success – Building a Better Mississippi” created by the Mississippi Legislature in July 2014)

- a. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians”
- b. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To ensure that current and future generations have access to the state’s abundant natural resources through restoration, protection, conservation and wise development of those resources”
- c. STATEWIDE GOAL – “To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism”

4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan

Over the next five years, the Secretary of State will continue to increase efficiency through streamlining operations, shrink the size of government where possible, and continue to serve Mississippians to the best of our ability. These efforts will support the Agency’s mission to fulfill duties in a transparent, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The Secretary of State’s Office will continue to operate as a results-based, goal-driven Agency.

Specifically, the Agency will complete the implementation of the following projects:

- a) Online Management of Public Lands. Online management of 16th Section lands began in 2019. School districts are now able to file annual reports and submit leases online. The division is working through changes and enhancements, and is providing training to the school districts on its use. Sections 29-1-3 and 29-3-82 were amended during the 2020 Legislative session to require all school districts to electronically file by FY2022 or 2023. The timber bid management system with GIS functionality was not completed by

2019, given other higher priority needs. At this time, the best estimate for development is 2022. Additionally, the Tidelands system is in the process of being modified to work with the Department of Marine Resources' new permitting system.

- b) Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. President Donald Trump signed a \$380,000,000.00 Omnibus Bill in March 2018, with Mississippi receiving \$4,483,541.00. On December 20, 2019, President Donald Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2020 authorizing an additional \$425,000,000.00 in new Help American Vote Act funds. Of that money, Mississippi received \$5,021,549.00. These amounts were calculated by the U.S. Government using the State of Mississippi's Voting Age Population. As instructed by the Elections Assistance Commission (EAC), these funds may be used to replace voting equipment that utilizes a voter-verified paper record; implement a post-election audit system that provides a high-level confidence in the accuracy of the final vote tally; upgrade election-related computer systems to address cyber vulnerabilities identified through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or similar scans or assessments of existing election systems; facilitate cybersecurity training for the state Chief Election Official's office and local election officials; implement established cybersecurity best practices for election systems; and fund other activities that will improve the security of elections for federal office. The State of Mississippi was required to provide a 5% match for the 2018 Federal funds, which equals \$224,117.00. As of June 30, 2019, the State matched these funds. During the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, the Legislature approved a \$210,000.00 re-appropriation of FY2018 appropriated funds to FY2019. The remaining balance of \$14,117.00 was paid from the Agency's FY2019 Appropriation. The State of Mississippi is required to provide a 20% match for the 2020 Federal funds, totaling \$1,004,310. Our office received a reappropriation of funds to act as a partial match between the 2020 HAVA Grant and 2020 CARES Act Grant in the total amount of \$950,000.00. After it is determined what amount of the 2020 CARES Act Grant is spent, the exact amount of the appropriated match can be determined for each purpose. These funds are interest-bearing funds. The interest is added to the amount payable to the counties. The counties will receive funds after completing the application for funds with the Secretary of State's Office. Once the request has been approved, the county may instruct vendors of their choosing to complete the work. Once the county has submitted all proofs of work performed and proof of payment, including detailed invoices, the Agency will request payment to be made either via PayMode or a warrant to be issued. Since June 30, 2019, MSOS has distributed \$1,353,061.35 to the following counties: Benton, Calhoun, Clarke, Coahoma, Desoto, Franklin, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Itawamba, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lincoln, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Neshoba, Newton, Pearl River, Pike, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Rankin, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Winston, and Yalobusha. The Secretary of State's Office has expended \$639,379 of these funds for the upgrade of the Statewide Election Management System (SEMS). In 2020, the EAC stated the funds no longer expire, should be combined for single reporting, and so long as in the State's possession, the State may use funds until all are expended.
- c) Y'all Business Website. The Agency is currently working on updating data as each dataset matures and new data is released. The Agency will continue to devote assets to business data on a county by county basis, and has recently partnered with the

Mississippi Small Business Development Center to improve the data used by the website. The goal of the partnership is to make Y'all Business a useful tool for small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to attract and educate future Mississippi businesses.

- d) Ongoing Network Security and Data Protection. The Secretary of State has been recognized as a leader in state government cybersecurity. As such, the Agency will continue to improve security by using the latest software and hardware from industry leaders. The Agency will move to a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to facilitate teleworking and improve security, and multi-factor authentication will be extended across all applications. The Agency has implemented an API-based business fraud prevention process to verify the identity of external users, and an enterprise wireless solution will be deployed across the Agency using the latest technologies in wireless security. A data management program is being developed to help classify and archive data, as well as identify data in need of encryption.
- e) Ongoing Improvements to the Statewide Elections Management System. Maintaining a secure and accurate voter registration system is of utmost importance to our office. The agency will develop a secure communications module to enable secure communications among SEMS users on the SEMS network. A secure ballot delivery system will be developed for the SEMS application, as well as additional reporting functionality. GIS capabilities will be added to SEMS to improve accuracy and facilitate tasks such as redistricting, reporting, and the production of maps.
- f) Online submission of securities notice filings began in 2003. Over the past five years, as platforms became available, the Agency has increased its utilization of them to make electronic filing of offerings more widely available. Over the next three years, we will add three more offering types that can be filed electronically and processed automatically.

5. External / Internal Assessment

- Changes in the economy, whether positive or negative, may affect the number of business filings processed – which may increase or decrease Business Services revenues.
- Legislative directives may change the course of projects and priorities. (Examples – Voter ID legislation, Help America Vote Act, Campaign Finance, The Vulnerable Adults Act, etc.)
- As more database hacking and network insecurities rise, IT costs follow this trend. The Agency has a strong focus on protecting sensitive information and will adopt and implement the latest cybersecurity products and practices needed to secure data in the Agency's custody.

6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Measures by Program

A. PROGRAM #1 - BUSINESS SERVICES

i. BUSINESS SERVICES (BS) GOAL A

To provide a wide range of services to individuals and companies who conduct business in Mississippi, including those starting a business within the state.

BS OBJECTIVE #A1:

Timely and accurately file all corporate, LLC, partnership, and other business documents to allow new and existing businesses to complete business transactions within the state.

Outcome: All business documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

A1.1 STRATEGY

Output - Number of business documents filed.

Efficiency - Documents filed on the website within two business days

BS OBJECTIVE #A2:

Timely and accurately file all Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) documents to allow lenders and borrowers the security necessary to conduct business in Mississippi.

Outcome: All UCC documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

A2.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of UCC documents filed.

Efficiency – UCC documents posted on website within two business days.

A2.2 STRATEGY

Output – Number of UCC searches requested and completed.

Efficiency – UCC searches completed within two business days.

BS OBJECTIVE #A3

Timely and accurately file other Mississippi business documents submitted to our office.

Outcome: All other business documents completed and returned to customer.

A3.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of notary applications processed.

Efficiency – Notary applications processed within two business days.

A3.2 STRATEGY

Output – Number of apostille applications processed.

Efficiency – Apostille applications processed within two business days.

BS OBJECTIVE #A4

Provide excellent customer service to those doing business in Mississippi.

Outcome: All inquiries answered timely and accurately.

A4.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of phone calls received.

Efficiency – Answer at least 95% of all calls, with average answer speed under 10 seconds.

A4.2 STRATEGY

Output – Number of work orders (other business searches) requested and completed.

Efficiency – Work orders completed within two business days.

ii. BUSINESS SERVICES (BS) GOAL B

To create an efficient government agency to regulate business-related matters assigned under the Agency’s purview: charitable organizations and fundraisers, the sale of securities and securities dealers, scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and other regulatory matters.

BS OBJECTIVE #B1:

Register and regulate all charitable organizations and fundraisers who solicit contributions in Mississippi.

Outcome: All charity and fundraiser documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

B1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of Charity/Fundraiser registrations and renewals processed.

Efficiency – Registrations and renewals posted to the website within two business days of receipt of completed package of documents.

BS OBJECTIVE #B2:

Investigate charity complaints and/or violations of the State’s charitable laws and levy fines or dissolve charities, when necessary.

Outcome: All examinations and investigations performed timely.

B2.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

Efficiency – Make contact with complainant within two business days.

BS OBJECTIVE #B3:

Register and regulate both the sale of securities and the securities professionals who sell them.

Outcome: All securities documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

B3.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of security registrations and renewals (offerings).

Efficiency – Offerings reviewed within five business days of receipt of complete security document package.

B3.2 STRATEGY

Output – Number of security registrations and renewals (firms/agents).

Efficiency – Firms/agents reviewed within 10 business days of receipt of complete security document package.

BS OBJECTIVE #B4:

Investigate securities complaints and/or violations of the State’s securities laws and levy fines. When necessary, work with federal and state prosecuting authorities to investigate violators of the State's securities laws.

Outcome: All examinations and investigations performed timely.

B4.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

Efficiency – Make contact with complainant within two business days.

BS OBJECTIVE #B5:

Register and regulate scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and athlete agents. Publish Mississippi Administrative Bulletin and Mississippi Administrative Code.

Outcome: All regulatory documents filed and posted to the Agency website.

B5.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of scrap metal dealers and processors registered.

Output – Number of pre-need establishments and agents registered.

Output – Number of perpetual care cemeteries registered.

Output – Number of athlete agents registered.

Output – Number of proposed and final Administrative Bulletin filings.

Output – Number of Administrative Code filings.

Efficiency – All regulatory documents processed within 2 days.

BS OBJECTIVE #B6:

Investigate complaints and/or violations involving scrap metal dealers and processors, the pre-need funeral industry, perpetual care cemeteries, and athlete agents. Suspend, deny, and revoke licenses, freeze trust funds, issue cease and desist orders, refer for criminal prosecution, and levy fines when necessary.

Outcome: All examinations and investigations performed timely.

B6.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of examinations, investigations, and complaints.

Efficiency – Make contact with complainant within two business days.

B. PROGRAM #2 – ELECTIONS

i. ELECTIONS GOAL A

Train local elections officials as required by law.

ELECTIONS OBJECTIVE #A1:

Train local elections officials who run elections in Mississippi.

Outcome: Train local elections officials on responsibilities in conducting elections at the local level.

A1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Hold multiple training sessions for county and municipal election officials.

Efficiency – 82 attendees to complete the Online Poll Manager Training.

Efficiency – 60% of Poll Workers to successfully complete the Online Poll Manager Training on their first attempt.

Efficiency – 50 updated Voter Registrations via the Online Voter Registration website.

ii. ELECTIONS GOAL B

Ensure public access to campaign finance and lobbyist reports filed with the Agency.

ELECTIONS OBJECTIVE #B1:

Timely process and make publicly available all required campaign finance and lobbyist filings and reports.

Outcome: Public access to campaign finance and lobbyist reports.

B1.1 STRATEGY

Output - Number of campaign finance and lobbyist reports.

Efficiency – 100% of reports posted to the Agency website within two business days of receipt.

C. PROGRAM #3 – COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS

i. COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS GOAL A

Produce and distribute official state publications, including the General Laws, Local & Private Laws, House and Senate Journals, and the Judiciary Directory and Court Calendar, as well as the Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi, more commonly known as the Blue Book.

COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS OBJECTIVE #A1:

To produce and distribute official state publications, agency publications, and other internal educational and meeting materials in a timely and accurate manner.

Outcome: Hard copy or electronic publications distributed.

A1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of statutorily required documents produced.

Output – Number of agency publications documents produced.

Output – Number of website/online postings of new materials.

Output – Number of bills chaptered and recorded.

Efficiency – Statutorily required documents published by the established date.

ii. COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS GOAL B

To oversee educational, outreach and constituent programs, including the Promote the Vote education program for K-12 students.

COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS OBJECTIVE #B1:

Educate Mississippians on Agency services and other outreach topics.

Outcome: Engage Mississippians with the Agency.

B1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of constituent customer service requests for documents or information.

Efficiency – Constituent requests completed within two business days.

B1.2 STRATEGY

Output – Number of educational events, speaking engagements, study groups, and/or public hearings.

Output – Number of students/schools participating in the Promote the Vote program.

Efficiency – Participation rate in Promote the Vote.

Efficiency – 11,000,000 visits to www.sos.ms.gov.

D. PROGRAM #4 - PUBLIC LANDS

i. PUBLIC LANDS GOAL A

To return fair value for state-owned leased land and ensure that current and future generations have access to the state's abundant natural resources through restoration, protection, conservation, and wise development of those resources.

PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #A1:

Manage the Public Trust Tidelands, including fast lands and submerged lands, through application of conservation, preservation, and protection policies and principles to preserve and maintain their ecosystems and to prevent their despoliation and destruction.

Outcome: Lease Public Trust Tidelands, where appropriate, to generate revenue for the disbursement by the Legislature through the Department of Marine Resources for programs and projects relating to conservation, reclamation, preservation, acquisition, education, and enhancement of public access to the tidelands.

A1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of Tidelands leases managed.

Output – Keep property records up to date on the Secretary of State’s Office website at www.sos.ms.gov.

Efficiency – Collection of leasehold rents or assessments within 30 days or assess a late penalty.

Efficiency – Collection of leasehold rents or assessments within 90 days or cancel the lease.

PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #A2:

Oversee management and leasing of more than 640,000 acres of 16th section public school trust lands by 101 local school districts by working cooperatively with the Mississippi Forestry Commission to manage the timber lands.

Outcome: Conserve, preserve, protect and manage 16th section public lands in Mississippi.

A2.1 STRATEGY

Output – Publish notices of public bids for hunting and fishing leases, agricultural leases, and mineral leases on 16th section public school trust lands.

Output – Number of 16th section leases managed.

Output – Keep property records up to date on the Secretary of State’s Office website at www.sos.ms.gov.

Efficiency – Review of leases with average turnaround time of less than 10 business days.

ii. PUBLIC LANDS GOAL B

Return properties forfeited to the State for non-payment of taxes to productive use by generating tax revenue for local tax rolls through the sale to individuals, businesses, or state agencies.

PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVE #B1:

Return parcels to productive use on the local tax rolls.

Outcome: Timely and accurately process applications for tax-forfeited land purchases.

B1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of tax forfeited applications processed.

Output – 500 tax forfeited properties sold.

E. PROGRAM #5 - SUPPORT SERVICES

i. SUPPORT SERVICES GOAL A

To create and maintain an environment of support to Agency employees, customers, and vendors, while modeling efficient and effective operations and prudent resource management in support of the functions and duties of the Agency.

SUPPORT SERVICES OBJECTIVE #A1:

Provide administrative and technical support to the Agency to allow Agency employees to function at the highest level.

Outcome: Agency supported by administrative, executive, and technical staff.

A1.1 STRATEGY

Output – Number of payments processed.

Efficiency – Payments processed within an average of less than 10 working days of invoice receipt.

Output – Number of technical services help desk calls received.

Efficiency – Technical help desk calls answered and tickets closed within an average of less than five business days.

Output – Number of pieces of mail processed.

Efficiency – Mail processed within an average of less than one working day of mailroom receipt.

Output – Support Services less than or equal to 27% Total Agency Expenditures.